

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 HA-05 SS-15 L-03 NSC-05  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06  
SP-02 BIB-01 /065 W  
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R 211530Z FEB 78  
FM AMCONSUL MUNICH  
TO AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9924  
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MUNICH 00966

ROME ALSO FOR VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINR, SCUL, BU  
SUBJECT: BULGARIAN PRIEST BORISLAV IVANCHEV

REF: SOFIA 265

1. PARA TWO OF THIS MESSAGE TRANSMITS RFE'S ASSESSMENT  
OF BULGARIAN JESUIT PRIEST BORISLAV GEORGIEV IVANCHEV.  
THIS ASSESSMENT WAS PREPARED BY THE BULGARIAN DESK OF  
RFE'S RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS DEPARTMENT.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

A. BORISLAV GEORGIEV IVANCHEV WAS BORN IN 1933 IN  
KRUSHOVENE VILLAGE, PLEVEN DISTRICT (CENTRAL NORTHERN  
BULGARIA). AS A CHILD HE STUDIED AT THE FRENCH CATHOLIC  
COLLEGE ST. JOSEPH IN PLOVDIV, AND AFTER IT WAS CLOSED  
DOWN, HE GRADUATED FROM A BULGARIAN-LANGUAGE HIGH SCHOOL.

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IN THE 1950S AND EARLY 1960S, HE STUDIED AT SOFIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY AND GRADUATED IN BULGARIAN AND CLASSICAL  
(LATIN AND ANCIENT GREEK) PHILOGOGIES WITH AN HONOR  
DIPLOMA.

B. IN HIS OWN WORDS, IVANCHEV WAS RELIGIOUS AND OFTEN,  
IF NOT REGULARLY, ATTENDED THE MASS IN THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ST. JOSEPH IN SOFIA. (HE CLAIMED THAT HIS PARENTS WERE CATHOLIC, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IT WAS HE HIMSELF WHO CONVERTED TO ROMAN CATHOLICISM). AT THE SAME TIME, IVANCHEV MAINTAINED CLOSE CONTACTS WITH THE UNIATE (EASTERN RITE) CLERGYMEN. BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1966 (WHEN HE DEFECTED TO THE WEST), IT WAS RUMORED AMONG HIS CLOSE FRIENDS THAT HE WAS INVOLVED IN SOME WAY IN "CATHOLIC AFFAIRS," BUT NOBODY REALLY KNEW HOW AND TO WHICH EXTENT. BECAUSE OF HIS RATHER FLOWERY AND JOVIAL MANNER OF SPEECH, NO ONE TOOK SERIOUSLY HIS RELIGIOUS DEVOTION. DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS, WHILE STILL IN BULGARIA, IVANCHEV WAS KNOWN, HOWEVER, TO HAVE SHARED A FLAT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SOFIA WITH AN AGING CATHOLIC PRIEST, WHO DIED SHORTLY BEFORE IVANCHEV'S DEFECTION.

C. ON 25 SEPTEMBER 1966, BORISLAV IVANCHEV WAS HELPED BY FOREIGN FRIENDS TO ESCAPE FROM BULGARIA WITH A FORGED BELGIAN DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT (CF. RHEINISCHER MERKUR, 27 JANUARY 1978). ACCORDING TO IVANCHEV'S OWN VERSION OF HIS DEFECTION, PRESENTED AT THE PRESS CONFERENCES IN VIENNA AND SOFIA (SEE RABOTNICHESKO DELO AND ZEMEDEL'SKO ZNAME, 22 DEC 1977 AND ALSO ALL SOFIA DAILIES OF 30 DEC 1977), HIS ESCAPE WAS ORGANIZED BY MEMBERS OF THE JESUIT ORDER, BUT ALLEGEDLY FINANCED BY THE CIA. ACCORDING, ONCE AGAIN, TO IVANCHEV'S OWN CONFIDENTIAL

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WORDS -- TOLD AND MANY TIMES RETOLD WHILE IN EMIGRATION THE VERSION WAS, IN GENERAL, THE SAME AS THE STORY PUBLICIZED BY THE BULGARIAN PROPAGANDA MEDIA AFTER HIS REDEFLECTION WITH THE NOTABLE EXCEPTION OF THE CIA'S INVOLVEMENT. AS FAR AS IS KNOWN, NO ONE AMONG HIS ASSOCIATES IN EXILE HAS EVER HEARD EVEN THE REMOTEST INSINUATION ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE CIA IN HIS LIFE OR PERSONAL AFFAIRS. (AS REGARDS THE DETAILS HE TOLD AT THE PRESS CONFERENCES ABOUT HIS STAY IN THE WEST, IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT IVANCHEV IS NOT KNOWN TO HAVE HAD ANY DIRECT CONTACT WITH RFE, EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT HE KNEW PERSONALLY SEVERAL OF THE BULGARIAN RFE EMPLOYEES.)

D. IVANCHEV'S FOREIGN FRIENDS TOOK HIM TO THE WEST VIA ISTANBUL, TURKEY. UNTIL 1969, HE STUDIED AND COMPLETED HIS THEOLOGICAL AND JESUIT TRAINING IN LYON, FRANCE. BETWEEN 1969 AND 1970 OR 1971, IVANCHEV WAS IN THE VATICAN, PROBABLY PREPARING HIS DOCTOR'S DEGREE. HE IS KNOWN TO HAVE OFTEN COMPLAINED THAT DURING HIS STAY IN ROME, SOME CATHOLIC CLERGYMENT OF BULGARIAN ORIGIN (AMONG THEM THE NAME OF MONSIGNOR GEORGI ELDAROV WAS

MOST OFTEN MENTIONED) HAD DENOUNCED HIM AS A "POTENTIAL COMMUNIST SPY," WHICH ALLEGATION IVANCHEV HAS ALWAYS MOST VEHEMENTLY PROTESTED.

E. IN 1970 OR 1971, BORISLAV IVANCHEV WAS TRANSFERRED TO MUNICH, WHERE HE STAYED UNTIL HE RETURNED TO BULGARIA VIA AUSTRIA. HE COMPLAINED THAT HIS TRANSFER WAS A RESULT OF "A SLANDEROUS CAMPAIGN INITIATED AND INSPIRED BY THE CAREERIST ASPIRATIONS OF THE BULGARIAN CATHOLIC OFFICIALS IN THE VATICAN." THE TRUTH SEEMS TO BE THAT ANIMOSITY AND BITTER FEUD, FOR UNKNOWN REASONS, ERUPTED

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FM AMCONSUL MUNICH  
TO AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9925  
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 MUNICH 00966

BETWEEN IVANCHEV AND HIS BULGARIAN COLLEAGUES IN ROME (E.G. ELDAROV IS RUMORED TO HAVE MADE REPEATEDLY CAUSTIC REMARKS ABOUT IVANCHEV'S DOCTOR'S DEGREE). UNTIL THE VERY EVE OF HIS RETURN TO BULGARIA, IVANCHEV CONSIDERED HIS STAY IN MUNICH AS A PUNITIVE MEASURE, AS "A COMPULSORY EXILE" FROM THE VATICAN, IN HIS OWN WORDS.

F. AS FAR AS IVANCHEV'S DECISION TO QUIT THE JESUIT ORDER AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND TO GO BACK TO BULGARIA IS CONCERNED, IT CAME AS NO SURPRISE TO THOSE WHO KNEW HIM. EVER SINCE 1968, WHEN HE RESUMED RELATIONS WITH SOME OF HIS FRIENDS, KNOWING HIM FROM BULGARIA AND NOW LIVING IN THE WEST, IVANCHEV WAS KNOWN TO HAVE SAID ON MANY OCCASIONS THAT HE WAS NOT ABLE TO GET

ACCUSTOMED TO THE RULES OF HIS ORDER, TO THE MORALS OF THE VATICAN, TO THE WAY OF LIFE IN THE WEST. HE WAS ALSO KNOWN TO HAVE OFTEN EXPRESSED HIS PROFOUND DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS AN INSTITUTION. IN THE COURSE OF THE YEARS, IVANCHEV INCREASINGLY INSISTED THAT  
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HE WOULD RETURN TO BULGARIA. ELDAROV HAS BEEN QUOTED AS HAVING SAID IN DECEMBER 1974 IN PARIS THAT IVANCHEV WANTED TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE AMNESTY GRANTED BY THE BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES AND TO GO BACK TO BULGARIA. DESPITE ALL HIS TALK, IT SEEMS, NO ONE OF IVANCHEV'S FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES HAS EVER BELIEVED THAT HE MEANT IT SERIOUSLY.

G. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT IVANCHEV'S FIRST STEPS AIMED AT REALIZING HIS PLANS TO GO BACK TO BULGARIA DATE AS EARLY AS 1976, WHEN HE WENT TO ZAGREB, YUGOSLAVIA TO SEE HIS SISTER, WHO WAS VISITING RELATIVES (OR FRIENDS). AT THAT TIME, HE IS SAID TO HAVE SMUGGLED A SUBSTANTIAL SUM OF MONEY (BOTH IN BULGARIAN LEVA AND FOREIGN CURRENCY) TO HELP HIS FAMILY. (NOW RUMORS SAY THAT THE MONEY WAS INTENDED TO SECURE HIS FUTURE FINANCIALLY, AT LEAST FOR A WHILE, IN BULGARIA.) IT IS BELIEVED THAT DURING THAT TRIP TO YUGOSLAVIA, ON HIS WAY THROUGH AUSTRIA, IVANCHEV CONTACTED, PROBABLY FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE BULGARIAN EMBASSY IN VIENNA, TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR HIS RETURN TO SOFIA. IT IS A FACT (RELATED BY IVANCHEV HIMSELF) THAT AT THAT TIME, WHILE IN THE AUSTRIAN CAPITAL, HE ATTENDED THE INAUGURATION CEREMONIES AT THE BULGARIAN CULTURAL CENTER IN VIENNA.

H. LATER, IN MAY 1977, BORISLAV IVANCHEV TOLD A BULGARIAN FRIEND OF HIS THAT HE WAS GOING TO ROME TO ASK THE CHURCH AUTHORITIES TO ALLOW HIM TO GO BACK TO THE VATICAN TO COMPLETE THE WORK ON HIS DOCTOR'S DEGREE. IVANCHEV IS QUOTED AS HAVING SAID THAT IN CASE OF AN ANSWER IN THE NEGATIVE: "I WOULD SPIT IN THEIR MUGS, AND GO BACK TO BULGARIA." A FEW MONTHS LATER, IN THE FALL OF 1977, IVANCHEV TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO SELL BACK  
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HIS FRENCH BOOKS TO THE FRENCH BOOKSHOP IN MUNICH, SAYING THAT HE NEEDED THEM NO LONGER BECAUSE HE WAS GOING TO RETURN TO SOFIA SOON.

I. ACCORDING TO VATICAN SOURCES, IVANCHEV'S RETURN WAS PROMPTED BY UNIDENTIFIED "FAMILY PROBLEMS." THE SAME SOURCES MAINTAIN THAT IVANCHEV"ASKED THE VATICAN FOR A VATICAN DIPLOMATIC OR OFFICIAL SERVICE PASSPORT SO THA HE WOULD BE ABLE TO TRAVEL TO BULGARIA WITH IMMUNITY. THE VATICAN REFUSED THE PASSPORT. TO ISSUE IT, IT WOULD HAVE CONTRAVENED DIPLOMATIC USAGE, SINCE HE WAS NOT ATTACHED TO THE VATICAN OFFICIALDOM."

J. THE IMPRESSION OF THOSE WHO HAVE KNOWN IVANCHEV FOR MANY YEARS BOTH IN BULGARIA AND IN EXILE IS THAT HIS REDEFECTION DECISION WAS TAKEN MAINLY BECAUSE OF THREE FACTORS: FIRST, HIS PROFOUND DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE ATTITUDE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AUTHORITIES, ESPECIAL BECAUSE OF HIS BITTER EXPERIENCE WITH THE BULGARIAN CATHOLIC OFFICIALS IN ROME; SECONDLY, BECAUSE OF HIS FRUSTRATED CAREER AMBITIONS; AND FINALLY, HIS SINCERE HOMESICKNESS. VATICAN SOURCES COMMENTED AFTER HIS REDEFECTION THAT "PEOPLE WHOM HE TALKED TO SAY HE DID NOT SEEM MENTALLY DERANGED, BUT SHOWED SIGNS OF BEING PSYCHOLOGICALLY DISTURBED." SUCH AN OBSERVATION, IT SEEMS, IS ALSO SHARED BY BULGARIANS WHO KNEW HIM.

K. AS FAR AS HIS FAMILY IN BULGARIA IS CONCERNED, IVANCHEV HAS A MOTHER AND A SISTER (SOME SAY, ALSO A BROTHER). HIS MOTHER IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED BY THE VATICAN WHILE IVANCHEV WAS IN THE WEST. HIS SISTER IS MARRIED TO AN AIR FORCE GENERAL (FORMER

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R 211530Z FEB 78

FM AMCONSUL MUNICH

TO AMEMBASSY SOFIA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9926

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 MUNICH 00966

PARTISAN), A MEMBER OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY. IT IS A FACT THAT THE RELATIONS BETWEEN IVANCHEV AND HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW HAVE VIRTUALLY BEEN NON-EXISTENT EVER SINCE THE LATTER LEARNED ABOUT IVANCHEV'S INVOLVEMENT IN "CHURCH AFFAIRS," THAT IS SINCE THE MID 1950S.

L. BORISLAV IVANCHEV IS HIGHLY INTELLIGENT AND, AT THE SAME TIME, EXTREMELY SLY (HE USED TO CALL HIMSELF "TARTUFFE," QUOTING EXTENSIVELY MONOLOGUES FROM THAT COMEDY). HE IS ALSO KNOWN AMONG HIS CLOSE FRIENDS AS A SKILFUL INTRIGUANT. APART FROM HIS RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES (WHICH APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN PROMPTED MORE BY CAREER AMBITIONS THAN BY SINCERE DEVOTION), HE HAS A PROFOUND INTEREST IN FRENCH LITERATURE AND IN A WIDE RANGE OF CULTURAL MATTERS. HE HAS NEVER BEEN VERY POLITICALLY MINDED. IVANCHEV IS FLUENT IN BULGARIAN, RUSSIAN, FRENCH AND LATIN; HE HAS ALSO QUITE GOOD COMMAND OF ITALIAN AND GERMAN. END TEXT. BETTS

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## Message Attributes

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